

Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUITO 01238 121836Z

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ACTION INR-07

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FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 9026

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 1238

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PINR, EC, BL

SUBJECT: BIO DATA ON ECUADOREAN AMBASSADOR DESIGNATE TO BOLIVIA,
RAFAEL GARCIA VELASCO

1. EARLY IN FEBRUARY 1976, THE GOE DESIGNATED AMBASSADOR RAFAEL GARCIA VELASCO, CURRENTLY MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS LEGAL ADVISOR, TO SERVE AS ECUADOREAN AMBASSADOR TO BOLIVIA. PROVIDING HE PASSES HIS MEDICAL EXAMINATION, GARCIA HOPES TO BE IN LA PAZ BY THE END OF FEBRUARY.

2. GARCIA VELASCO, BORN JANUARY 15, 1923, HAS ACHIEVED DISTINCTION IN GOVERNMENT, IN ACADEME AND IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION. HIS GOVERNMENT CAREER BEGAN IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY IN 1941 BUT HAS BEEN INTERSPERSED WITH SERVICE IN OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES. FOR TEN YEARS HE WORKED IN THE OFFICE OF PLANNING, AND IN 1965 HE SERVED AS MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT. WITHIN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY HE OCCUPIED NUMEROUS POSITIONS, INCLUDING ADVISOR ON TERRITORIAL AFFAIRS, SUBSECRETARY (1964-65), AMBASSADOR TO LIMA, AND FOREIGN MINISTER (FOR A PERIOD OF 8 MONTHS IN 1972).

3. GARCIA IS AN EXPERT IN LAW OF THE SEA MATTERS, AND HE HAS HEADED HIS COUNTRY'S DELEGATION TO SEVERAL LOS MEETINGS. HE HAS BEEN ONE OF THE KEY FIGURES IN THE RECENT LOS AND NORTHEAST PACIFIC FISHERIES DISCUSSIONS IN QUITO.

4. GARCIA'S EARLY POLITICAL HISTORY IS CHECKERED. HE BELONGED TO LEFTIST POLITICAL GROUPS AS A STUDENT AND REPORTEDLY WAS ONCE A MEMBER OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY. TODAY HE IS VIEWED AS A POLITICAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 QUITO 01238 121836Z

INDEPENDENT. HE IS VERY FAVORABLY DISPOSED TO THE US, AND

IN GENERAL IS DEFINITELY PRO-WEST IN HIS ORIENTATION. BECAUSE HE BECAME DEAN OF THE CENTRAL UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL AT A VERY YOUNG AGE, GARCIA VELASCO IS REGARDED AS "THEIR TUTOR" BY A VERY LARGE NUMBER OF ECUADOREANS IN KEY POSITIONS IN GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY. HIS INFLUENCE WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERABLE BECAUSE OF HIS EXTENSIVE PROFESSOR-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS, HIS FAMILY CONNECTIONS, HIS RECOGNIZED THOROUGHNESS AND INTELLIGENCE, AND HIS INDEPENDENCE. HE WAS FOR EXAMPLE, ABLE TO CONTINUE WORKING IN A RELATIVELY HIGH POSITION WITHIN THE RODRIGUEZ LARA GOVERNMENT WHILE AT THE SAME TIME SIGNING AS PRESIDENT OF THE LAWYER'S ASSOCIATION A LETTER PROTESTING THE GOE'S TREATMENT OF LAWYERS DEFENDING MILITARY OFFICERS INVOLVED IN THE ABORTIVE SEPT. 1 COUP.

5. GARCIA VELASCO IS A BROTHER-IN-LAW OF FOREIGN MINISTER ARMANDO PESANTES, AND PESANTES' SON TOLD THE AMBASSADOR RECENTLY THAT GARCIA VELASCO WAS HIS FATHER'S "FIRST ADVISOR." GARCIA VELASCO'S APPOINTMENT TO BOLIVIA AT THIS TIME IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE IMPORTANCE ECUADOR ATTACHES TO NEGOTIATIONS IN PROCESS AMONG CHILE, BOLIVIA AND PERU REGARDING BOLIVIA'S EFFORTS TO GAIN ACCESS TO THE SEA. THE ECUADOREANS BELIEVE THAT DEVELOPMENTS ON THIS MATTER WILL AFFECT ECUADOR'S EFFORTS TO RECOVER ITS CLAIMED AMAZONIC TERRITORIES FROM PERU. THE GOE IS ALSO INTERESTED IN HOW BOLIVIA, IF GRANTED ACCESS TO THE SEA, WILL HANDLE THE TERRITORIAL WATERS QUESTION. IN ADDITION, GARCIA VELASCO TOLD THE AMBASSADOR RECENTLY THAT HE EXPECTED TO FORWARD HIS VIEWS TO FOREIGN MINISTER PESANTES ON WIDER QUESTIONS OF FOREIGN POLICY FROM TIME TO TIME, AND FOR THIS REASON WOULD WELCOME CONTACT WITH AMBASSADOR STEDMAN.

6. GARCIA VELASCO HAS BEEN MARRIED AT LEAST TWICE AND HAS GROWN CHILDREN AS WELL AS YOUNGER ONES. HIS PRESENT WIFE IS YOUNGER, VERY PERSONABLE, AND ATTRACTIVE. SHE SPEAKS GOOD ENGLISH. AMBASSADOR GARCIA READS AND UNDERSTANDS BUT IS LIMITED IN HIS ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH.
BREWSTER

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